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ABSTRACT

Between 1973-1979, the elementary educational system in rural areas of Poland has been reorganized into a system of collective commune schools: students commute or are bused to the schools. Since September 1973, 944 new collective commune schools have been set up. A study of the data indicates that the process of setting up collective commune schools has been closely correlated with the degree of socio-economic development of single voivodships (provinces) in the country. In recent years, commutation of children and youth to elementary and secondary schools has increased considerably. Data from 1975 studies by the Main Office of Statistics indicate that 90.5% of commuting elementary school children have their school in the village, and only 9.5% commute to the nearest town. However, 78.2% of the secondary students commute to schools located in towns (which are the centers of higher-than-elementary education). Commutation for elementary school children takes up to half an hour for 80.6%, from half an hour to one hour for 18.0% and over one hour for 1.4%. Because daily commutation to elementary schools is essential to the educational system, commutation of students constitutes an essential component of socio-economic development planning. (CM)

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REORGANIZATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND COMMUTATION OF CHILDREN TO COLLECTIVE COMMUNE SCHOOLS

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REORGANIZATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND COMMUTATION OF CHILDREN TO COLLECTIVE COMMUNE SCHOOLS

In this paper the changes in the state and distribution of collective commune schools in Poland in the years 1973/1974 - 1977/1978 are presented.

The shape of the new network of elementary schools is closely connected with the commune network established in 1973. Thus, the concept of collective commune school refers to the new administrative division of the country on the commune level and to the reform of commune authority functioning. The collective commune school, accommodated in the seat of commune administrative authorities, constitutes an educational and cultural centre of the commune. The setting up of collective schools, in particular, of collective commune schools, was a result of the state administration reform carried out in 1973, which introduced the commune as an elementary territorial-administrative unit.

ORGANIZATION OF COLLECTIVE COMMUNE SCHOOLS

In the years 1973-1979 essential changes occurred in the network and organization of elementary educational system in rural areas, and the system of collective commune schools plays now an ever bigger role in total organization of elementary education in Poland.

Beginning with 1st September 1973, i.e. in the first year of setting up of collective commune schools, 723 out of 2365 of existing communes started functioning, which means that in 1973 collective commune schools were brought into being in 30 per cent of communes /Table 1/.

Table 1. COLLECTIVE COMMUNE SCHOOLS IN THE SCHOOL YEARS 1973/74 - 1978/79

Year	Number of communes x/	Number of collective commune schools xx/			Percent of communes having collective commune schools
		Schools years	Number	Increase of collective commune schools	
1973	2365	1973/74	723	+ 503	30,6
1974	2345	1974/75	1226		52,3
1975	2327	1975/76	1512	+ 286	65,0
1976	2128	1976/77	1585	+ 73	74,5
1977	2070	1977/78	1639	+ 54	79,2
1978	2070	1978/79	1717	+ 78	82,9

x/ As of the end of calendar year
xx/ In school years

Source: Statistical Yearbook of 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979. Statistical Yearbook of Education of 1975/1976, 1976/1977.

In result of further, advancing reconstruction of the school network, 1717 collective commune schools were appointed up to 1979, i.e. in 82,9 per cent of communes, which were attended by 78,9 per cent of children residing in rural districts. At the period under study, i.e. in the years 1975/76 to 1978/79, 205 more collective commune schools were set up. It should be noted that the actual increase of newly created 994 collective commune schools in the years 1973/74 - 1978/79 coincided with the revision of administrative boundaries on the commune level, In effect of those changes, their number decreased from 2365 in 1973 to 2070 in 1979, i.e. by 295 communes /Table 1/.

Assuming as the criterion the percentage of appointed collective commune schools, in relation to the number of communes in single voivodships, we can state the following disproportions between voivodships. In the school year 1975/76 the highest percentage of the occurring of collective commune schools was to be found in the voivodships of Zielona Góra and Radom /83,6 per cent/, Szczecin /81,3 per cent/, and Skierniewice /81,1 per cent/, whereas the lowest in the voivodships of Częstochowa /43,1 per cent/, Włocławek /47,4 per cent/, and Słupsk /48,7 per cent/. These indices for the years 1977/78 are the following: the highest percentage of the occurring of collective commune schools was noted in 21 voivodships, including over 90,0 per cent in the voivodships of Zamość /100,0 per cent/, Gorzów /97,4 per cent/, Piotrków /96,1 per cent/, Skierniewice /94,4 per cent/, Zielona Góra /94,0 per cent/, Legnica /93,5 per cent/, Szczecin /92,0 per cent/, Łódź and the capital voivodship of Warsaw /90,0 per cent/, whereas the lowest from 55,0 - 60,0 per cent, occurred in a group of voivodships, namely in Opole voivodship /59,0 per cent/ and Elbląg /59,5 per cent/.

After study of the quoted data, it can be said that the reconstruction of the school network at the period under study proceeded with different intensity in single voivodships and regions of the country /Table 2/. The coefficient of collective commune schools in North-East, central and Southern parts of Poland is the least favourable. 1/

1/ K.M. Palonka, Pupils Commuting to Communal Schools. New the Schools. Warsaw 1980, No. 5, pp. 203-210.

Table 2. DIVISION OF VOIVODSHIPS IN GROUPS ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF ORGANIZED COLLECTIVE COMMUNE SCHOOLS IN THE SCHOOL YEARS 1975/76 and 1978/79 x/

No.	Percent of communes having collective commune schools	Number of voivodships in absolute numbers		in per cent	
		in school years		in school years	
		1975/76	1978/79	1975/76	1978/79
1	100.0 - 90.0	0	9	0	18.5
2	90.0 - 85.0	0	4	0	8.2
3	85.0 - 80.0	4	8	8.2	16.3
4	80.0 - 75.0	5	12	10.2	24.5
5	75.0 - 70.0	8	8	16.3	16.3
6	70.0 - 65.0	11	5	22.4	10.2
7	65.0 - 60.0	4	1	8.2	2.0
8	60.0 - 55.0	7	2	14.3	4.0
9	55.0 - 50.0	7	0	14.3	0
10	50.0 - 45.0	3	0	6.1	0
TOTAL		49	49	100.0	100.0

x/ Own calculations

It was found that in the areas of a higher degree of urbanization, of bigger industry concentration, and of a higher degree of technical infrastructure, collective commune schools were formed faster than in areas where the percentage of scattered-structure localities prevailed, and those of lower population density per 1 sq km, of lower concentration degree of social facilities, as well as in more severe geographical environment. Thus, a conclusion comes up that the process of setting up of collective commune schools is closely correlated with the degree of socio-economic development of single voivodships in the country.

The studies of K. Podoski and B. Piasecki clearly confirm different concentration degrees of infrastructure facilities in the area of the country. As it appears from K. Podoski' s maps, a low concentration degree of social and technical infrastructure occurs in the group of North-East, South-East and central-East voivodships.[1/]

COMMUTATION OF CHILDREN TO COLLECTIVE COMMUNE SCHOOLS IN AN ORGANIZED SYSTEM

The functioning of collective commune schools in rural areas in present-day conditions, and after further changes wich followed, with the outlook of implementing the idea of common secondary school, is closely linked with children' s commutation and busing them to schools. The ensurance of a well organized commutation to school for children is one of vital problems for efficient organization of teaching and educational work. It is often the dominating factor of regular school functioning in a rural environment.

In recent years, commutation of children and youth to elementary and secondary schools reached a considerable extent countrywide.

1/ K. Podoski, B. Piasecki, Distribution of social infrastructure in rural areas. Contemporary Countryside 1974, No. 5, pp. 36-44.

It is also the outcome of the educational reform concerning elementary schools and, at a later stage, common secondary schools, introduced in our country on 1 January 1973. Beginning with 1973 the commutation to collective commune schools keeps growing. The reform of the network system of elementary schools introduced after 1973 conditioned the funktioning of higher levels of elementary education in rural areas on busing of the children to collective schools.

Up to 1973 the commutation problem of youth to secondary and higher schools prevailed in Poland. The biggest extent and intensity of commutation to schools occur in bigger towns of Poland, which are centers of higher-than-elementary educational system. Although in the recent years the number of children commuting to collective elementary schools increased considerably, in view of the specific character of these schools it is distributed fairly equally and concentrates mainly around commune localities and bigger villages. Commutation to these settlement units is not so big as to higher-than-elementary schools since it concerns one school only.

However, further development of collective commune schools, connected with closing down of schools of a lower organizational level, is an assumption for further increase of the number of children commuting and bused to school and home. The above is illustrated by the data contained in Table 3.

Table 3. CHILDREN COMMUTING AND BUSED TO COLLECTIVE COMMUNE SCHOOLS IN THE SCHOOL YEARS 1973/74 - 1976/77 1/

Children	School years			
	1973/1974	1974/1975	1975/1976	1976/1977
Commuting	58.257	107.721	136.955	145.765
Bused	71.874	157.401	200.922	249.702
TOTAL	130.131	265.122	337.877	395.467
Relation of bused children to commuting ones	1.23	1.46	1.46	1.71

As it appears from Table 3 the number of commuting and bused children in an organized system to collective commune schools keeps growing. This process reached particular dynamics after 1976. We can say that commuting children and those bused to collective commune schools, along with students commuting to higher-than-elementary schools, became an every-day sight ever more noted in Poland. It should be emphasized that the knowledge of the extent and problems connected with commutation to elementa-

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1/ T. Kowalski, Educational and caring aspects of children' s commutation to collective commune schools. In: Modernization of educational system in rural areas. Scientific fascicles of the Warsaw University Branch in Białystok. Białystok 1977. Vol. VIII. Pedagogical Studies, pp. 367-387.

Source: Statistical Yearbook of 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979. Statistical Yearbook of Education of 1975/1976, 1976/1977.

ry schools, little widespread till now, becomes an essential factor of spatial development, particularly, of shaping of the transportation systems and the social infrastructure network.

The problem of commutation to school in Poland is the subject of study of many scientific disciplines such as pedagogy, psychology, sociology, statistics, spatial development, transportation economics and organization, and economic geography.

As it appears from studies on commutation to elementary schools, the commutation takes place in the relation village-village and not village-town, which is connected with the system of collective schools. It is shown in the 1975 studies of the Main Office of Statistics that 90.5 per cent of commuting elementary school children have their school in the village, and only 9.5 per cent commute to the nearest town. For the sake of comparison, 78.2 per cent of students attending higher-than-elementary schools commute to a school located in town.

Out of 502,926 daily commuting elementary school children in Poland, 405,213, i.e. 80.6 per cent of them, come from areas from which the commutation takes up to half an hour, 18.0 per cent of children need from half an hour to one hour, and only 1.4 per cent commute over one hour. Single voivodships are marked for a different commutation structure as regards the commutation duration [1/].

1/ K.M. Palonka. Commutation of school children to elementary schools. In: Modernization of the educational system in rural areas. Scientific fascicles of the Warsaw University Branch in Białystok. Białystok 1977, Vol. VIII. Pedagogical Studies, pp. 333-366

In a group of voivodships of high population density and fine settlement network the share of the nearest commutation is high, e.g. in the city voivodship of Cracov, Legnica, Bielsko, Częstochowa, Wrocław and Opole. On the contrary, voivodships of less dense population and of underdeveloped transportation network show, in general, a smaller number of near commutation, and a bigger number of commutation from medium distances, i.e. from half an hour to one hour. These are North, North-East and South-East voivodships. School children commuting daily to elementary schools prevail in the first distance section, which means that most commutation are made within a half-hour isochrone. The other sections are represented in smaller numbers. In the North-East and South-East part of Poland the one-to-two-hour commutations of school children are most numerous. Commutations taking over two hours occur rather rarely.

Daily commutations to elementary schools, due to their extent and influence on various fields of social life, became an essential and vital element of the educational system, in the broadest sense of the word.

Therefore, commutations to elementary schools, just as commutations to work or to higher-than-elementary schools, call for more consideration at all stages of socio-economic development planning, as they constitute an essential component of this development.